

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 638

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to congratulate the artists honored at the 2017 W.C. Handy Heritage Awards.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should salute those fine Tennesseans who, through their vast musical talent, bring the joys of artistic expression and culture to the citizens of this State; and

WHEREAS, 2017 marked the 144th birthday of the famed W.C. Handy, known throughout the world as the "Father of the Blues." In honor of Mr. Handy's birthday, the W.C. Handy Memphis Home and Museum Preservation, operated by Heritage Tours, hosted the W.C. Handy Heritage Awards, honoring "Authentic Beale Street Musicians" and Memphis's musical contributions to the world; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 W.C. Handy Heritage Awards paid special tribute to the late Marvell Thomas, a keyboardist, producer, songwriter, arranger, and composer who was an integral part of the "Memphis Sound" launched by Stax Records. He was known in the music industry as a versatile and talented musician whose work included blues, R&B, soul, rock, jazz, classical pop, and other musical styles; and

WHEREAS, the illustrious Lifetime Music Achievement Award was presented to both Grammy-winner and Stax recording artist William Bell and the Diva of Soul, Shirley Brown, a Grammy-nominated soul and R&B artist; and

WHEREAS, the W.C. Handy Heritage Awards also recognized well-known Memphis musicians who have contributed to Memphis music and the Beale Street Legacy; these talented musicians and entertainers, whose roots are on Beale Street, have performed nationally as well as internationally and have kept the Memphis musical tradition alive by sharing their talent with music lovers the world over; and

WHEREAS, those exemplary individuals who were honored as "Authentic Beale Street Musicians" include Melvia "Chick" Rogers-Williams, an R&B soul singer, whose repertoire also includes gospel and appearances in stage plays and musicals; Kenneth Jackson, an accomplished composer, trumpeter, guitarist, and pianist, known as a dynamic entertainer and master teaching artist; James Nelson, a gospel singer and Stax recording artist; Morris Cummings, also known as Blind Mississippi Morris, a blues harmonica player and blues singer; and Randy Brown, a Stax soul recording artist; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body finds it appropriate to join Heritage Tours, the W.C. Handy family, and the good people of Memphis in honoring these remarkable musicians and entertainers, both past and present, who have utilized their talent and love of music to preserve the Blues tradition of Memphis, never forgetting the musical legacy that the great Father of the Blues, W.C. Handy, so aptly "composed" and inspires within us today; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we congratulate each of the artists honored at the 2017 W.C. Handy Heritage Awards, expressing our deepest appreciation for the years of pleasure that they have bestowed upon their fans, and extend our best wishes for many more years of creative musical success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.